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Christmas on Campus

11.30.2010 | Campus and Community

University of Dayton students will welcome hundreds of Dayton area school children to a winter wonderland of cartoon characters, games, dancing, singing, crafts, face-painting and Santa Claus during the University's 47th Christmas on Campus Wednesday, Dec. 8.

Started in 1964 as a way for a group of students to celebrate Christmas before heading home for the winter break, the event has evolved into what is believed to be one of the nation's largest single-day, on-campus community service events. Nearly three-quarters of the student body is

involved in the event.

All Christmas on Campus events are free and open to the public.

The school children will arrive in C Lot, off Evanston Street by RecPlex, between 5 and 5:30 p.m.

The opening ceremony, live Nativity, tree lighting and Santa's arrival are scheduled for 5:30 p.m. in Humanities Plaza.

Activities in Santa's Workshop, RecPlex and Kennedy Union start after the tree lighting and end around 8 p.m.

In the Jesse Philips Humanities Center, Santa's Workshop activities include making magnets, Christmas cards, Popsicle picture frames and paper snowmen, and frosting cookies. Santa will take pictures with children in the Science Center, rather than the Humanities Center.

The carnival in RecPlex features children's games.

Kennedy Union is the place for entertainment. Performers include Miami Valley Dance Company, Celtic Academy of Irish Dance, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company 2, South Dayton Dance Theater and Jeraldyn's School of Dance Youth Ensemble.

Dayton school children will return to their buses by 8:15 p.m.

Four Masses will celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at 9 a.m., 12:05 p.m., 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 8.

Prior to last year, Christmas on Campus ended with one large Mass with thousands of people in the Frericks Center.

"We received a lot of positive feedback about having four Masses instead of one giant Mass," said Emily Strand, director of liturgy. "Overall, people liked the convenience of the various Mass times and the simplicity of the location. Many students who attended the 9 p.m. Mass cited the familiar, intimate nature of the Immaculate Conception Chapel as heightening their celebration of both an important feast day and an important occasion."

The music department will hold its Christmas on Campus concert at 7 p.m. in the Immaculate Conception Chapel.

Ellie Kurtz, director of the University of Dayton's student union from 1964 to 1994 who died in 2009, started Christmas on Campus.

"One night I was preoccupied with a sense of disappointment that students would be leaving for Christmas vacation and would not be able to celebrate Christmas with their friends and the UD family," Kurtz said. "I imagined what a wonderful Christmas we could have if we could celebrate Christmas before the students went home for the holidays."

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.